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ABSTRACT

This curriculum module offers concrete and specific examples for instructors who wish to integrate the films of Yasujiro Ozu of Japan and Zhang Yimou from China into film studies courses. Through this module, students should learn to compare and contrast conventional screen space, color, and editing to alternative forms. By becoming more familiar with Asian examples of film making, students should be able to articulate, discuss critically, and demonstrate the differences between Hollywood and alternative Asian styles. Included in this module is a list for audiovisual support and resources, step by step instructions for time allocation, goals and student objectives and content and teaching strategies. Pre-test and post-test assessments are provided along with discussion questions and additional activities. A detailed annotated bibliography provides a rich review of books on Asian film and cultural negotiation. Two appendices include comparative information and illustrations contrasting traditional film making to Asian models. (Contains 32 references.) (AF)

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FILM

"INTEGRATING ASIAN FILM INTO FILM STUDIES AND FILM PRODUCTION COURSES USING EXAMPLES FROM YASUJIRO OZU (JAPAN) AND ZHANG YIMOU (CHINA)"

Use In: Film Appreciation
Filmmaking
Advanced Filmmaking

BY

DIANE CARSON

JC 000 146

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ASIAN STUDIES CURRICULUM MODULE:

INTEGRATING ASIAN FILM INTO FILM STUDIES AND FILM PRODUCTION COURSES USING EXAMPLES FROM YASUJIRO OZU (JAPAN) AND ZHANG YIMOU (CHINA)

COURSES: MCM:130 FILM APPRECIATION
MCM:134 FILMMAKING & MCM:216 ADVANCED FILMMAKING

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CONTENTS:

1. Time Allocation
2. Goals
3. Student Objectives
4. Content and Teaching Strategies
5. Assessment--Pre-Test and Post-Test
6. Discussion Questions
7. Additional Activities
8. Audiovisual Support and Resources
9. Connections, Comparisons, Contrasts
10. Annotated Bibliography
11. Appendix A: The 180 degree Rule
12. Additional Annotated Bibliography

1. TIME ALLOCATION FOR MODULE

The time allotted to integrating examples from Asian films into film studies and film production courses will vary with the degree of importance each instructor gives to multicultural examples, especially illustrative clips that offer alternatives to the conventional Hollywood system.

The following suggestions for integrating examples from the films of director Yasujiro Ozu (Japan) and director Zhang Yimou (China) will require the following estimated class time:

FILM STUDIES:

MCM:130 FILM APPRECIATION
Three (3) hours in-class for the instructor to present and discuss examples from Yasujiro Ozu's *Floating Weeds* and Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou*.

This may be done at two different times, that is, 1 1/2 hours devoted to Yasujiro Ozu during classes one week and 1 1/2 hours

presenting Zhang Yimou another week. The two directors need not be discussed at the same time since their films are used to illustrate different principles of film style and aesthetics.

An additional three (3) to four (4) hours will be required if two films (one by Yasujiro Ozu and one by Zhang Yimou) are viewed in their entirety, in or out of class, depending on the structure for viewing films in individual courses. Screening complete films is an optional part of this module, that is, the instructor can communicate the ideas illustrated by Ozu's and Zhang's films using clips. Alternately, instructors might give interested students the option of watching entire motion pictures out of class as an extra credit assignment.

Add another half hour to one hour if pre-tests and post tests are given.

FILM PRODUCTION:
MCM:134 FILMMAKING--two (2) hours each:
1. Yasujiro Ozu and the 180 degree line
2. Zhang Yimou and the aesthetics of film composition

MCM:216 ADVANCED FILMMAKING--two (2) hours to review, one hour for Ozu's violation of the 180 degree line and one hour for Zhang's expressionistic use of color. Note: MCM:134 Filmmaking is a prerequisite for MCM:216 Advanced Filmmaking. I assume any advanced filmmaking course has an introductory production course prerequisite. Therefore, classes need only review the 180 degree line and composing with sensitivity to color. However, if time permits, discussion of both these topics could be expanded with new examples from Ozu and Zhang introduced and discussed.

2. GOALS and RATIONALE

The purpose of MCM:130 Film Appreciation is to bring students to an understanding of the technical and aesthetic elements of the film medium. Students should be able to recognize, identify, and describe spatial orientation (the 180 degree rule) and the conventional use of color. In addition to that goal, in our film production courses students translate that understanding into practice in their films.

MCM:134 Filmmaking and MCM:216 Advanced Filmmaking teach students to use the super-8 (MCM:134) and 16 millimeter (MCM:216) film media effectively and creatively. Students learn about properly exposed and imaginatively composed images. In this process, the goal is for students to recognize and use the basic elements of the conventional (usually called "Hollywood") style and to use, as appropriate, other filmmaking styles.

The Hollywood system is characterized by a realistic use of color, conventional (Renaissance perspective) composition, and a traditional editing pattern, including adherence to the 180 degree rule. This curriculum module will acquaint students with alternatives to the pervasive Hollywood system.

This module has the equally important goal of acquainting students with two Asian directors, one a classic Japanese director and one a contemporary, fifth-generation Chinese director from the People's Republic of China. They are: Yasujiro Ozu--Japanese, 1903-1962 & Zhang Yimou--Chinese, 1952-present.

Our students live in an increasingly interdependent, multicultural world, and yet few of them watch foreign films, especially Asian ones. This lack of exposure reinforces ethnocentric, xenophobic tendencies in some. Because films offer a relatively accessible, enjoyable introduction to other cultures, their inclusion in film studies and film production courses accomplishes two important goals: offering alternatives to Hollywood dominance and introducing Japanese and Chinese cultures to students.

3. STUDENT OBJECTIVES:

In Film Appreciation, Filmmaking, and Advanced Filmmaking courses, students should learn:

-- to recognize and identify conventional, Hollywood editing patterns, especially spatial orientation and adherence to the 180 degree rule

-- to compare and contrast conventional screen space with Yasujiro Ozu's use of screen space and his violation of the 180 degree rule

-- to recognize and describe the conventional, Hollywood style in its realistic use of color

-- to compare and contrast Zhang Yimou's imaginative, effective, expressionistic use of color with Hollywood's realistic art direction

-- to use creative alternatives to the conventional editing style when and as appropriate in their film production work

-- to choose to adapt or imitate alternatives to the Hollywood system in composition and color in their own films as they storyboard, shoot, and edit their productions

-- to recognize and describe other features of Yasujiro Ozu's and Zhang Yimou's compositions, especially camera angles and camera placement (especially in contrast to conventional western styles)

-- to think about, write about, and discuss critically the Hollywood style of filmmaking and the differences in content, filmic rhythm, and style of Asian examples

-- to articulate and discuss observations and insights into Japanese and Chinese cultures as illustrated in film clips: themes, characters, and narrative structure

4. MODULE CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

A. In class, first review verbally the typical Hollywood system of framing and editing (which we will have already covered), the aesthetics of the Hollywood style, especially its realistic use of color, and the alternatives available to filmmakers.

See Appendix A from John Cantine, Susan Howard, and Brady Lewis's *Shot By Shot: A Practical Guide to Filmmaking*, 2nd ed., Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Filmmakers, 1995, pages 66-72 [ISBN 0-9637433-1-7], used with their permission (letter from the authors available upon request). This text, used in both filmmaking courses, gives a clear, concise outline of the conventional establishment of screen space and the 180 degree rule. A section in most Film Appreciation texts describes the same basic principles.

B. Watch several brief (5 minutes each) clips from one or more Hollywood films illustrating the conventional system. Examples are numerous. Almost any Hollywood, studio film will model this style of filmmaking: general adherence to the 180 degree rule and a realistic use of color. One possibility is to use the detailed analysis in David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's *Film Art: An Introduction*, 4th ed, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993 of spatial continuity in *The Maltese Falcon*, *Bringing Up Baby*, and other Hollywood films, pp. 262-275.

C. Part I: Spatial Orientation and the 180 Degree Line: To illustrate violation of the 180 degree line, watch several clips from Yasujiro Ozu's *Floating Weeds*. This film has numerous examples. Two that work extremely well are: Komajuro's first entry into Oyoshi's cafe and the scene about halfway through the movie in the post office between Kayo and Kiyoshi. A good

reference is David Bordwell's *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988. In it Bordwell analyzes and discusses Ozu's distinctive compositions and editing patterns.

Part II. Effective Use of Color in Compositions:
As preliminary reading for class, assign Jenny Kwok Wah Lau's "*Judou*: An Experiment in Color and Portraiture in Chinese Cinema," in *Cinematic Landscapes: Observations on the Visual Arts and Cinema of China and Japan*, ed. Linda C. Ehrlich and David Desser, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994, 127-145.

In class, watch clips from Zhang Yimou's *Ju Dou*. Select several scenes from early in the film in which golden yellow, streaming light, and bright reds dominate with paler colors, grays and browns subordinated. Then, for contrast, watch several clips from late in the film. Notice the darker reds and paler yellows, the weaker light, the dominance of grays, browns, blacks and blues with only touches of bright red, such as the headscarf that Tianqing gives Ju Dou as a reminder of their happier times.

Using Lau's article as a resource, discuss Zhang Yimou's expressionistic use of color, especially in contrast to any conventional Hollywood film clips that the instructor chooses to use. Again the choices for traditional color composition are numerous.

In discussing Zhang's use of color, note the ways in which the color scheme complements the emotional state of the characters, that is, style reinforces content. This is clearly described in Lau's article. Presentation and discussion of editing, composition, and aesthetics is enhanced by repeating the clips, with, if possible, still frame analysis.

As important to achieve the goal of introducing Asian themes and ideas, analysis should include a consideration of Chinese culture as discussed in the above cited Jenny Kwok Wah Lau article and in her "*Judou*--A Hermeneutical Reading of Cross-cultural Cinema," *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Winter 1991-1992), 2-10. Another very useful article to encourage discussion of the cultural elements is W.A. Callahan's "Gender, Ideology, Nation: *Ju Dou* in the Cultural Politics of China," *East-West Film Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (January 1993), 52-80.

For further study of Zhang Yimou's color design and mise-en-scene, students may also be directed to his *Red Sorghum*, *Raise the Red Lantern*, *To Live*, or *Shanghai Triad*. Each of his films models a provocative use of color and visually stunning compositions.

D. For film production classes, after discussion of the articles and the film clips, encourage students to experiment in their own productions with different editing styles, camera placement, and use of color. One possibility is to ask students to select one scene in their next film in which they will consciously compose with a sensitivity to color, camera angles, and perspective in a way that departs from the usual Hollywood style.

In Film Appreciation, students might be encouraged to watch other films directed by Zhang Yimou and write a critical analysis of one or more scenes. This analysis should focus on the use of color and composition. Students might also find similar examples in another director's work, for example, Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* or *Farewell My Concubine*.

5. EVALUATION--Pre-Test and Post-Test

PRE-TEST: Assess students' understanding of the aesthetics of color, mise-en-scene, and editing as alternatives to the Hollywood system in one or more of the following ways.

A. For evaluative purposes, ask students to complete a brief pre-test/survey before presenting the module.

Pre-Test/Survey:
1. List one Japanese director and one Chinese director.

2. List any Japanese or Chinese films you have seen.

3. Explain the 180 degree line and spatial orientation and explain any alternatives you have observed to it.

4. Explain the difference between the realistic and the expressionistic use of color in film. Cite one example for each category.

B. In-Class Discussion: Film production classes are limited to 15 students and Film Appreciation classes enroll 35 students. In small classes, discussion is one way to assess students' understanding of spatial continuity and the use of color. In these courses, presentation and discussion are the primary teaching strategies which I use.

This curriculum module will be included approximately halfway

through the semester, Week 7 or 8. Show brief film clips and ask students to describe what they see, first by jotting down notes and then verbally. Let the students know that you will collect their writing, but not grade it. Pre-tests are for my information only because I expect students to be somewhat confused by unorthodox editing patterns and to have a difficult time recognizing and describing the expressionistic use of color.

C. Through Production Work: Pre-Production Storyboards: By looking at the storyboards students draw for each of their films, I see if any, deliberately or inadvertently, use an alternative to the Hollywood system in terms of screen space or color. Students will have made at least one film by the curriculum module presentation date halfway through the semester. If alternatives appear that in any way compare with the Asian examples, I pursue a discussion, in class or one on one, of the alternatives offered by the student to determine the intent and awareness of the alternative style.

Every time a student shows a film in class, every class member comments or asks a question about it. This discussion period will offer an opportune time to pursue this topic and to determine if the student or students have any knowledge about alternatives to the conventional Hollywood system.

EVALUATION AND POST-TEST: I will assess students' understanding of the information in this module in one or more of the following ways, dependent upon the course and the students' choices.

A. Repeat the Pre-Test/Survey, anticipating that students will now answer all four questions with varying degrees of expertise and detail.

B. Inclusion in Production Work: To the extent that students incorporate these elements into their productions, I'll give them feedback on the appropriateness and success of their use of expressionistic color and/or their alternative spatial continuity. Students might designate one scene within a longer film for this experiment or they might choose to make a short film using expressionistic color and/or alternative spatial orientation throughout.

C. Storyboards: Since I comment on storyboards as well as on students' final, edited footage, there may be some students who would prefer not to deviate from their use of the conventional Hollywood style in their actual shooting. In that case, incorporation of their ideas in storyboards only would be an alternate way to evaluate their understanding of these ideas.

Storyboards might be the best way to evaluate students shooting films in black and white (most of my students shoot in black and white because a lab in St. Louis processes black and white footage twice a week.) Through storyboards, students can try out their newly acquired ideas designing with color in mind and the instructor can evaluate their understanding of the topics covered in the module.

A storyboard exercise can be done by students in production or film studies classes since no film needs to actually be exposed to test ideas in this way.

D. Post-production Evaluations: Students write a post-production evaluation and analysis of every film they complete for the production courses. Their evaluations provide another way to see if they understand the choices they made in their use of this alternative system for editing or their use of color.

E. In-Class Discussion: I'll continue to assess students' understanding of the ideas covered here by the discussion in class and the inclusion of one question concerning this on the mid-term, short essay exam.

During the exam, I show one of the clips we discussed in class or a similar clip and ask them to analyze the aesthetics of the shots, the use of color, and the editing pattern(s). Their grasp of the material can be demonstrated in this way.

Note: For students with test taking problems or with other disabilities, alternative assignments can be given. For example, we have a testing facility where students can have tests dictated to them and where they can have additional time. I have also had students tape record their answers to essay or discussion questions. Accommodations can be made which will allow students to demonstrate their grasp of the material.

6. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

To accompany the activities, some or all of these questions might be used in class and/or handed out to students:

A. Watch the first clip from *Floating Weeds*. What do you notice that is different from the clips we've seen--*North by Northwest, Adam's Rib, The Maltese Falcon*, or almost any dialogue or action scene from an American film? Consider framing, use of color (in *North by Northwest*), and editing patterns.

B. In the editing in Yasujiro Ozu's *Floating Weeds* what rule is violated, a rule that we saw illustrated in *A Nickel for the*

Movies [a film we use in film production courses] and/or that is sketched and described in your text? What is the effect on the establishment of space and the demands made on the viewing audience by Ozu's pattern?

C. Do you find, as adherents to the Hollywood formula claim, that you are disoriented spatially in a scene shot and edited in Ozu's style? Why or why not?

D. When would you choose to use such an editing pattern? What would you hope to accomplish with it?

E. Watch the first clip from *Ju Dou*. What do you notice about the framing and the use of color in the compositions? How is this different from what you are accustomed to seeing in conventional American films?

F. What is the effect on the audience members who are sensitive to the use of color and the composition of scenes?

G. When and how might you use this in your own films? When would it be most appropriate? Give at least one specific example.

7. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR PRESENTING THE MODULE:

A. Viewing Clips: Most classic Hollywood films can be used to illustrate traditional editing patterns. As suggested in Section 4, one clear examples that illustrates this principle very well and that is discussed at length in David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's *Film Art: An Introduction*, 4th ed., New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993, is *The Maltese Falcon*. After reading about and discussing spatial continuity, shot/reverse-shot patterns, eyeline matches, establishing and reestablishing shots, and matches on action, students should be able to recognize and analyze the editing patterns and composition flow of the typical Hollywood scene.

If time permits, consider having a designated student, several students, or several groups bring in a three to five minute clip, show it to the class, and then rerun it, freeze framing the video or laserdisc in order to point out spatial continuity and editing points. I have done this in both film studies and film production classes and can attest to the benefits. Not only does it involve students to a greater degree than their analyzing my selection, but they introduce films that they and, to a large extent, their classmates embrace. These are often not films I would choose. Moreover, the students achieve a very high level of peer involvement when they present material. This takes only a little more time than my own presentation and has much to recommend it.

Next, move on to viewing clips from Yasujiro Ozu's and/or Zhang Yimou's films including, when possible, freeze frame and slow motion to illustrate the patterns and compositions.

I want to reiterate here that each clip should be shown at least two times to help students see the differences. St. Louis Community College at Meramec has *Floating Weeds* and *Ju Dou* on laserdisc which greatly aids in the ability to scan forward and backward and to freeze frame to illustrate details of composition and editing. Videotapes would also be very useful in this regard.

B. IN-CLASS DEMONSTRATION by Students: One simple activity can immediately and effectively illustrate the 180 degree line and the importance of spatial orientation. Get a camcorder for the day (we have them available through our media circulation services), hook it up to a monitor visible to all students in the room, and set up several scenes.

First, have two students sit opposite each other and carry on a conversation. Respecting the 180 degree line, move from shot to reverse shot patterns. Then, violate the 180 degree line while the two students continue to talk, facing each other. This will clearly and immediately demonstrate the confusion when spatial orientation is reversed, which crossing the 180 degree line will effect.

C. PRODUCTION WORK by Students and Application of These Principles: Build on the assignment mentioned in Section 5 of a storyboard exercise for students to illustrate their understanding of spatial continuity and aesthetic considerations. Again, if time permits, have the students exchange storyboards and critique their peers' efforts before presenting the information to the entire class. This works well in production classes which are limited to 15 students; it would be more difficult but not impossible in larger classes.

Ask students to designate specific scenes in their films or in their storyboards where they apply these principles. I do not insist that students include changes in both color and editing. In other words, I will not insist that they make a film that deviates in its entirety from the conventional system. It should be a fairly straight-forward exercise for students to storyboard, (even if they choose not to shoot) a creative film. And even if they don't want to include this alternative style in one of their films, they will have thought about and illustrated its potential use.

Last, but not least in terms of importance, ask students to discuss the insights they've gained into Asian culture by entertaining ideas and themes they might also use in their films, themes that show their understanding of some aspect of Asian cultures. For example, students might shoot a film that focuses on the interaction among their family members in a way reminiscent of Ozu's concerns.

8. A-V SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Clips from videos and laserdiscs are the most important resources. Audiovisual support services include videotape machines with still frame functions and/or laserdisc players and CAV laserdiscs. CLV laserdiscs can not be freeze framed, but even with CLV laserdiscs it is an easy matter to scan forward and back and to repeat scenes with ease.

Other resource materials include the videotapes and laserdiscs of selected films, texts and articles, outlines and diagrams (handouts and overheads) of the American formula as contrasted with Zhang's and Ozu's styles.

An excellent source for Chinese and Japanese laserdiscs and videotapes is Facets Multimedia, 1517 West Fullerton Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60614; 1-800-331-6197. Fax: 1-773-929-5437.

9. CONNECTIONS, COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS

The connections with this unit are many and easy to make in a film studies or a film production course. Students will have seen many American films, have a familiarity with the conventional style, and have a basis for analyzing alternatives to it.

My experience is that two primary goals are achieved. First, students clearly see the contrast between Ozu's and Zhang's style and the Hollywood system. Several have commented that they've never understood Hollywood so well as when they've looked at the alternatives. Second, students become intrigued with the aesthetic accomplishments and the cultural world reflected in the clips used. Several have pursued other films by Japanese and Chinese directors, especially by Yasujiro Ozu and Zhang Yimou.

The benefits in terms of broadening cultural and technical horizons has been considerable and gratifying.

10. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The best anthologies on Chinese and Chinese/Japanese cinema are:

Berry, Chris, ed. *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991.

Several articles in this anthology provide insight into the contrasts between western and eastern aesthetics and cinematic mise-en-scene. I recommend, especially, Catherine Yi-Yu Cho Woo's "The Chinese Montage: From Poetry and Painting to the Silver Screen," 21-29 and Esther C.M. Yau's "*Yellow Earth*: Western Analysis and a Non-Western Text," 62-79.

Ehrlich, Linda C. and David Desser, eds. *Cinematic Landscapes: Observations on the Visual Arts and Cinema of China and Japan*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.

This anthology is extremely helpful in learning about the aesthetics of composition and framing and the use of color. Especially useful for this module is Jenny Kwok Wah Lau's "*Judou*: An Experiment in Color and Portraiture in Chinese Cinema," 127-145. The book is divided into two parts, and the introduction to each gives a concise and excellent foundation for understanding Asian film. Part One begins with Douglas Wilkerson's "Film and the Visual Arts in China: An Introduction," 39-44.

Part Two begins with Thomas Rimer's "Film and the Visual Arts in Japan," 149-154. Other illuminating articles include Donald Richie's "The Influence of Traditional Aesthetics on the Japanese Film," 155-164; Kathe Geist's "Playing with Space: Ozu and Two-Dimensional Design in Japan," 283-298, and David Desser's "Gate of Flesh(tones): Color in the Japanese Cinema," 299-322. The introduction to the text, Sherman Lee's "Contrasts in Chinese and Japanese Arts," 15-38, also gives a wonderful overview.

For a good resource on Ozu, see:

Bordwell, David. *Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Bordwell's book includes a chapter on the "Structures, Strictures and Stratagems" of Ozu's style, pp. 51-72. In addition, Bordwell summarizes and analyzes Ozu's compositions and editing in numerous other sections. The book gives an exhaustive summary and survey of Ozu's career and films. The extensive use of illustrations helps enormously in explaining the analysis.

Other extremely useful books are the following:

Desser, David. *Eros plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

This book is useful in terms of understanding the aesthetics of the Japanese New Wave films (1960 to 1970) as well as the history that they responded to. It is inclusive, so Desser doesn't go into depth on any one film. He does give an intelligent analysis of the milieu and, for some films, the editing rhythms and compositions.

Another very useful anthology for understanding and analyzing Japanese cinema is:

Nolletti, Arthur, Jr. and David Desser, eds. *Reframing Japanese Cinema: Authorship, Genre, History*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

In most of the fifteen essays collected in this anthology, the authors focus on one film of one director. Some of these are very useful, for example, Donald Richie's "The Inn Sequence from Ozu's *Late Autumn*," 113-125 and Kathe Geist's "Narrative Strategies in Ozu's Late Films," 92-112.

For those students keen on learning more about Asian cinema, consider the more extensively annotated bibliography, Appendix B.

APPENDIX A.--See attached pages from *Shot by Shot: A Practical Guide to Filmmaking*. John Cantine, Susan Howard, & Brady Lewis. 2nd ed., Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Filmmakers, 1995.

APPENDIX B. ADDITIONAL ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHINESE FILMS

Berry, Chris, ed. *Perspectives on Chinese Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.

A provocative anthology with articles ranging from a chronicling of Chinese film's institutional history to cross-cultural critiques. Issues addressed include: the representation of women and sexuality, the relationships between communal ideologies and feudal hierarchies, national identity and the community, and (through translated documents) the debate between Fourth and Fifth Generation directors over film theory and film as product. One article evaluates Taiwanese and Hong Kong cinema, another focuses on sixty years of animated film in China, and several articles analyze specific films, among them *Yellow Earth* and *Red Sorghum*. Appendices provide a helpful chronology of general history and cinema history and a glossary of Chinese characters. This is a good upper-division undergraduate text.

Browne, Nick, Paul G. Pickowicz, Vivian Sobchack, Esther Yau, eds. *New Chinese Cinemas: Forms, Identities, Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

A much-needed anthology which covers contemporary Chinese cinema from the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Nine essays address issues such as postsocialism, film melodrama, the viewing subject, border crossing, parody and allegory. The anthology also includes useful chronologies, a glossary, and a listing of "Scholarly Works on Chinese Filmmaking in the 1980s," including periodicals, dissertations, and books.

Camera Obscura: A Journal of Feminism and Film Theory. Special Issue: "Chinese 'Women's Cinema'" by Chris Berry. No. 18, 1988, 4-51.

An informative section on Chinese "Women's Cinema" provides background on the topic and asks the important questions about women's contributions as directors and women as a topic of investigation in contemporary Chinese film. A brief introduction outlining these areas theoretically is followed by three interviews with Chinese women directors. The material doesn't pretend to definitively answer these complex questions, but it does offer a new overview and some insightful, personal perspectives.

Chow, Rey. *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

Part 1 includes a provocative study of what this book's title promises: a consideration of "visuality, modernity, and primitive passions." In Part 2, Rey Chow applies her insights to specific films, especially those by Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou. Part 3 considers "film as ethnography."

Clark, Paul. *CHINESE CINEMA: Culture and Politics since 1949*. Cambridge University Press, 1987, 1991.

An ambitious, comprehensive history of filmmaking in the PRC from its roots in the pre-1949 Shanghai-centered film industry to the emergence of the Fifth Generation from the Beijing Film Academy in the mid-1980s. It is strongest in its sociohistorical documenting of political movements and policy changes, though 184 pages leaves some background information sketchy. Not much on popular cinema or the issues raised in Berry's anthology or the *Camera Obscura* issue. This book provides a necessary foundation for the theoretical works by Berry and included in the periodicals listed here.

Review: Gina Marchetti, *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Spring 1990) 54-56.

Dissanayake, Wimal, ed. *Cinema and Cultural Identity: Reflections on Films from Japan, India, and China*. New York: University Press of America, 1988.

The anthology's aim--to examine the relationship between film and culture in major Asian national cinemas (Japan, India, and China)--is not achieved. It has no overall bibliography or filmography and lacks intellectual rigor. Entries are wildly uneven--some excellent, some shoddy--and sometimes just wrong. The section on Japanese cinema is the weakest, with the exception of Richie's article; Clark and Rayns on Chinese cinema and Binford and Vasudev on Indian cinema are very good.

Review: David Desser, *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 48, Issue 2 (May 1989), 334-335.

East-West Film Journal. Now defunct, but from 1986 to 1994, it was published twice yearly, January and July, by the Program for Cultural Studies, East-West Center, University of Hawaii Press. Every issue contains an array of very good articles on Asian/Pacific film, including close analysis as well as book reviews.

Hall, Stuart. "Encoding/Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language*, ed. Stuart Hall, et al. London: University of Birmingham, 1980, 128-38.

Hall's article describes reader/viewer reception in terms of preferred/dominant, negotiated, and oppositional/resistant responses. He reminds us that the meaning resides in the transaction between the receiver and the work and cautions against assuming one definitive response.

Lent, John A. *The Asian Film Industry*. London: Christopher Helm, 1990.

A brief overview of the following industries: China, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, The Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Burma, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Seems to be a good overview, 300 pp, good index, sections based in part on interviews, and good references.

Leyda, Jay. *Dianying (Electric Shadows): An Account of Films and the Film Audience in China*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1972.

A detailed history of the Chinese film industry until 1967. 500 pp. Seems encyclopedic. Given its date, it obviously can't include the stimulating Fifth Generation filmmakers. Probably a great resource book; not something to use to teach for most courses.

Marchetti, Gina. "Ethnicity, the Cinema and Cultural Studies," *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity nd Cultural Studies*, ed. Lester D. Friedman, Champaign: University of Illinois, 1988.

Rayns, Tony and Scott Meek. *Electric Shadows: 45 Years of Chinese Cinema*. Dossier Number 3, London: British Film Institute, 1980.

The dossier begins with "An Outline History of the Film Industry in China" (7 pages, paragraph descriptions of the various film companies), "An Introduction to the Aesthetics and Politics of Chinese Cinema" (5 pages), and two translated articles, one left-wing cinema in the 1930s and the other post-Liberation cinema. The bulk of this dossier consists of very useful credits, synopses, and notes on thirty films plus briefer entries on 19 additional works. The dossier concludes with brief biographical sketches on thirty-four individuals: actors, directors,

scriptwriters, and cinematographers.

Semsel, George S., Xia Hong, and Hou Jianping, ed. *CHINESE FILM THEORY: A Guide to the New Era*. Hou Jianping, Li Xiaohong, and Fan Yuan, trans. New York: Praeger, 1990.

As the title indicates, this 209 page book surveys current Chinese Film Theory including sections on the debates over the following topics: the theatricality of film, its literary quality, the new concept of film, its nationalization, tradition and innovation, and a conclusion on Chinese film aesthetics and their philosophical and cultural fundamentals.
The authors have translated all of these.

Review: Paul Clark, *The Journal of Asian Studies*. 1990. 675-676.

Likes the title, says the subject is timely but "translation problems limit the usefulness of the book." The articles are organized by sections according to general topics in Chinese film circles, and "most of the major film theory debates of the 1980s are represented by significant essays by the various participants. . . In choice of articles and in organization [it] proves a useful starting point." Drawbacks: articles have been edited but we don't know how or why. In some cases, "they have altered meanings or deleted arguments." Some of the material removed contains important historical information or examples (Yuan Wenshu and Shao Mujun, for example.) Many translation inaccuracies occur. Still, readers can learn "about the basic issues involved in 1980s Chinese film theory."

Semsel, George Stephen, ed. *CHINESE FILM: The State of the Art in the People's Republic*. New York: Praeger, 1987.

It begins with a brief introduction to the Chinese film industry (pp. 1-14) and moves into a chapter on "The Founding of the Northeast Film Studio, 1946-1949" by Patricia Wilson, then Chapter 2, "Film Theory in the People's Republic of China: The New Era" by Xia Hong (35-62, 78 notes). Chapter 3 (63-93) is "Notes on the New Filmmakers" by Ma Ning in which the Cultural Revolution's effect on film and the Fifth Generation are discussed. Specific analysis is included for: *One and Eight* (1983), *Yellow Earth, Sacrificed Youth*, and "minority films" like *Horse Thief*. Except for a brief closing chapter, the rest of the book (107-178) is devoted to interviews with directors, actors, cinematographers, etc.: Xie Jin, director of the third generation; a couple middle-aged directors, and fifth generation representatives Tian Zhuangzhuang, Chen Kaige, Zhang Yimou, Yin Tingru, etc. I found it insightful and interesting.

Review: Paul Clark, *Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol. 47, Issue 3 (August 1988) 623-624--unfavorable--as follows:

Clark says the ahistoricism of the theory chapter "is typical of the volume and makes assessment of the aesthetic problems of Chinese cinema difficult." He likes Ma Ning's film analysis. However, Clark says Semsel "has no knowledge of the Chinese language and a severely circumscribed understanding of China." He says the interviews have many errors, e.g., Tian Zhuangzhuang says his parents were cinematographers when they were actually actors. Too many errors like this, numbers of films made, etc. --I still find it very useful.

Semsel, George S., Chen Xihe, and Xia Hong. *Film in Contemporary China: Critical Debates, 1979-1989*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993.

189pp. This work presents the debates, translated from Chinese, that went on throughout the 1980s in Chinese cinema circles, after 1979, when "China formally launched its modernization program and reform movement" (xix). It is a continuation of *Chinese Film Theory: A Guide to the New Era*, "a second collection of translations designed to introduce the contemporary film theory of the People's Republic of China" (xi). With a brief glance through them, the essays seem to convey the diversity and debates, refuting any idea of these films or filmmakers as unified in their approach. The essays offer some rare insight into the internal debate.

Yau, Esther C.M. "*Yellow Earth*: Western Analysis and a Non-western Text," *Film Quarterly*. Vol 41, Issue 2, 22-39, also in Berry.

--- "Is China the End of Hermeneutics? Or, Political and Cultural Usage of Non-Han Women in Mainland Chinese Films," *Multiple Voices: Issue in Feminist Film Criticism*, ed. Diane Carson, Linda Dittmar, & Janice R. Welsch, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming October 1993.

Wide Angle. Chinese Film. Vol. 11, No. 2. Johns Hopkins University Press. 1989.

INDONESIAN FILM

Said, Salim & John H. McGlynn. *Aspects of Indonesian Culture: Cinema*. New York: Festival of Indonesia Foundation, 1991.

A brief history of Indonesian cinema (pp. 1-18) followed by notes and synopses on 11 films.

Said, Salim. *Shadows on the Silver Screen: A Social History of Indonesian Film*. trans. Toenggoel P. Siagian. Jakarta: Lontar Foundation, 1991.

As its subtitle states, in its 139 pages this book traces the social history of filmmaking in Indonesia. Since I know almost nothing about Indonesian film, it is impossible for me to evaluate this book.

Sen, Krishna. *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order*. London: Zed Books, Ltd. 1994.

A synthesis of the myriad aspects of Indonesia's changing sociopolitical environment which then moves to analysis of specific films and filmmakers, illustrating the social circumstances and impact on the industry. Sen explains and supports his contention that Indonesian cinema is political. See my review in *Journal of Third World Studies*, Fall 1997.

JAPANESE FILM

Buehrer, Beverley Bare. *Japanese Films: A Filmography and Commentary, 1921-1989*. Jefferson: North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1990.

This filmography includes more than 80 films listed in chronological order from 1921 to 1987. Each entry gives the film's credits, a narrative summary, and a critical commentary. Closing material includes: a brief chronology of "Major Japanese Historic Periods" (281-282), a "Directory of Video and Film Sources" (283-288), a glossary (289-291), and a briefly annotated bibliography of books and periodical articles on Japanese films and directors runs pp. 293-321. This filmography is a wonderful reference work that, as far as I know, seems accurate and informed. It does not engage a deep theoretical critique but the bibliography points to important works. It looks very useful.

Burch, Noel. *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

363 pp. One of the first and more theoretical texts addressing the Japanese film industry. Keiko McDonald describes it as "a combination of Marxist/semioticist perspectives [which] leads to an emphasis on form at the expense of content and sometimes to a

misinterpretation of issues in films. Burch, however, does provide many cogent observations, especially on formal aspects of various films" (13). Though theoretical and not always as laser accurate as desirable, Burch does offer provocative ideas on directors from Ozu and Naruse to Ishida and Shimizu. Useful, not seminal.

Desser, David. *Eros plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

Desser states his ideological purpose is to "bring historical specificity to the Japanese New Wave cinema and to place it within the wider discourses of historical, political, social, and cultural studies" (2). Desser defines Japanese New Wave as "films produced and/or released in the wave of Oshima's *A town of Love and Hope*, films which take an overtly political stance in a general way or toward a specific issue, utilizing a deliberately disjunctive form compared to previous filmic norms in Japan" (4). He examines: He aims to "show how certain Japanese filmmakers used cinema as a tool, a weapon in a cultural struggle" (3). It concludes with the usual notes on the chapters (213-2225), a "New Wave Filmography" (227-230), a bibliography (231-234), and index. Desser has a reputation for good critical work and the brief sections I read seem insightful. (Text runs pp. 13-212, 7 chapters.)

McDonald, Keiko I. *Cinema East: A Critical Study of Major Japanese Films*. East Brunswick, N.J.: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1983.

McDonald's work contains essays on: *Rashomon, The Woman in the Dunes, Double Suicide, Red Beard, The Harp of Burma, Ugetsu, Death by Hanging, The Throne of Blood, Eros plus Massacre, Tokyo Story, Twenty-four Eyes*, and *Odd Obsession*. The text runs pp. 23-269 and ends with a "Selected Bibliography" 270-273. A brief skimming of the articles leads me to think they'd be very helpful in preparing and teaching on these films. McDonald discusses symbolism,character types, mood, spatial differentiation, time, story, and the rhetoric of film in her 7 chapters. Looks good.

Richie, Donald. *The Japanese Movie: An Illustrated History*. Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1966.

From the earliest days, photos and discussion on film history. It's a well illustrated and interesting book. It's not a text for class, but is a great resource.

MISC.

Armes, Roy. *Third World Film Making and the West*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Armes' discusses the social, cultural and economic context of third world cinema, its theory and practice, and national film industries. He ends with profiles of several accomplished, third-world directors: Satyajit Ray (India), Youssef Chahine (Egypt), Glauber Rocha (Brazil), Yilmaz Guney (Turkey), Ousmane Sembene Senegal), and Jorge Sanjines (Bolivia). The text runs pp. 7-311, notes (313-326), and the bibliography (327-361. A brief look at the book makes me want to read his critique of the capitalist, colonizing industry that is Hollywood and the select third-world responses to it. Armes says he has attempted to "keep the focus broad and to make the issues clear, while outlining an overall development and presenting certain areas of significant achievement" (3).

Jarvie, I.C. *Window on Hong Kong: A Sociological Study of the Hong Kong Film Industry and Its Audience*. Centre of Asian Studies: University of Hong Kong, 1977.

Dated, of course, and probably not really much use except as background reference. It seems well written and insightful, if not very elegant.

Appendix A.

Shot By Shot

A Practical Guide To Filmmaking

Second Edition

BY

John Cantine • Susan Howard • Brady Lewis

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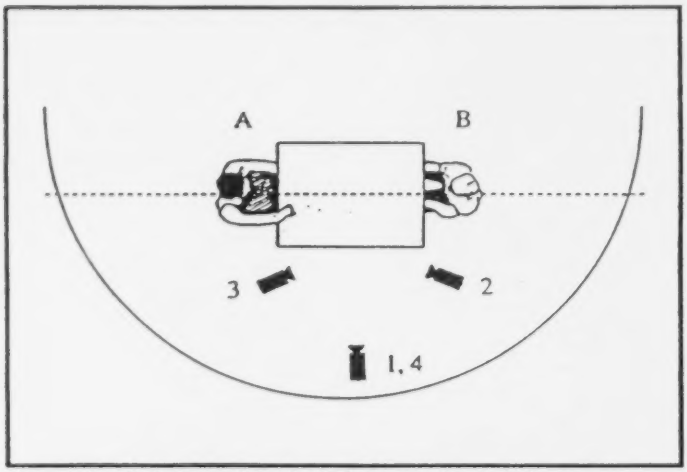
PITTSBURGH FILMMAKERS
THE MEDIA ARTS CENTER

1995

THE 180-DEGREE RULE

A filmmaker must have an idea of the individual shots that will be used to create a scene when preparing to shoot. A scene depicting two people having breakfast might consist of three basic shots; a medium shot showing both people seated at a table and two close-ups, one of each person. In order to shoot and edit this scene effectively it is important to understand the 180-degree rule.

Within any given sequence the filmmaker establishes an imaginary 180-degree line sometimes referred to as the "axis." This line is established based on the natural line or direction of action within the sequence. The camera's position must remain on one side of that line from shot to shot so that the filmmaker can edit the scene smoothly. All shots are taken from the same side of the 180-degree line. If the camera crosses the line, a mistake in screen direction will occur. In the breakfast scene the director might begin by establishing the line or axis. If two actors are seated directly across a table from one another the line of sight between the two characters would serve as a natural 180-degree line:



An overhead view showing the 180-degree line and three camera positions for a sequence of four shots. The numbers indicate the order of the shots in the edited sequence.

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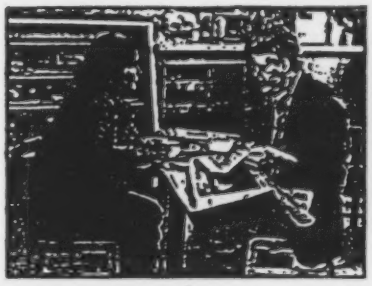
Suppose the filmmaker creates a four-shot sequence. The first shot is a medium shot of the two people at the table. This is followed by a close-up of character "A," then a close-up of character "B," and the sequence is completed with another medium shot. The series of shots would look like this:



1. MS, both characters

2. CU, character "A"

3. CU, character "B"

4. MS, both characters

The resulting sequence of shots when adhering to the 180-degree rule.

The overhead view shows that the camera positions are all on the same side of the 180-degree line. However, if a shot is taken from a position on the wrong side of the line a mismatch in continuity will result:

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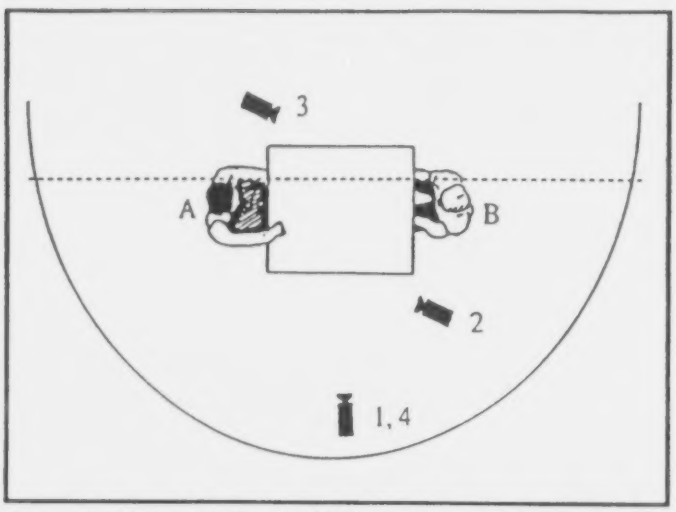
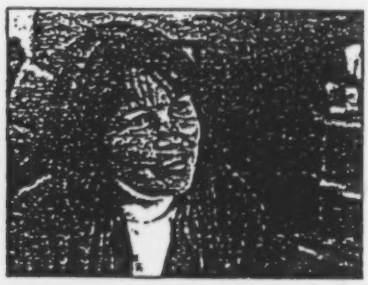


An overhead view showing the 180-degree line and three camera positions for a sequence of four shots. Camera position 3 is on the wrong side of the 180-degree line.

1. MS, both characters



2. CU, character "A"

3. CU, character "B"

4. MS, both characters

The resulting sequence of shots when breaking the 180-degree rule. In shot 3 character "B" is facing screen right, while in shots 1 and 4 he is facing screen left.

In the close-ups it appe
looking in the same dir
This error in continuity i
on the wrong side of th
rule, screen direction w
from one side or the oth
natural line of action w

Changing Scr

At times it is just as nec
is to maintain it. In mos
entirely in one directio
change screen direction

1. Changing Direc

This method for altering
Simply show the subje
Once you have establis
concerned with preserv

Changing

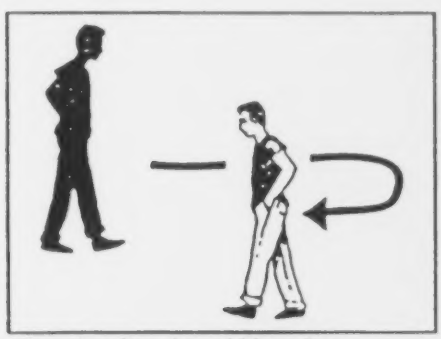
In the close-ups it appears as if the two characters are both looking in the same direction instead of looking at each other. This error in continuity is the result of positioning the camera on the wrong side of the line. To summarize the 180-degree rule, screen direction will be maintained if all shots are taken from one side or the other of the imaginary axis defined by the natural line of action within a sequence.

Changing Screen Direction

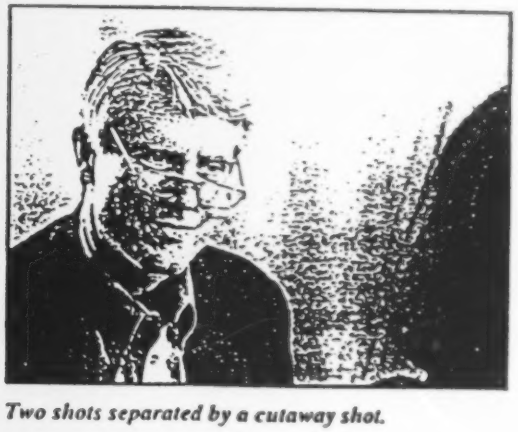
At times it is just as necessary to change screen direction as it is to maintain it. In most films the screen action does not move entirely in one direction. In general there are four ways to change screen direction within a scene or sequence.

1. Changing Direction Within the Shot

This method for altering screen direction is the most obvious. Simply show the subject changing direction within the shot. Once you have established a new screen direction, you will be concerned with preserving the continuity of the new direction.



Changing direction within a shot.



Two shots separated by a cutaway shot.

2. The Cutaway

If there are two shots taken f
degree line, and you want to r
and avoid confusing the aud
these shots back to back. So
of the story, two mismatched
after the other. A simple way
separate the two problematic
several shots) between them
tends to remember and be m
relationships between any giv
immediately precede and fo

A cutaway shot is a shot of s
the immediate action of the
eating breakfast a cutaway sh
person in the room. If you c
the diners to this sort of cut
taken from the other side of t
creating a mismatched cut.

Most of the time cutaway sh
meaning to a scene. Howev
useful in masking screen direc
continuity. Filmmakers ofte
are not really crucial to the
necessary to cover problems i
discovered during editing.

3. Neutral Angle

Using the same strategy of
by putting something betwee
shot with ***neutral*** screen dir
nor screen right. A **neutral a**
camera positioned *on* the 180

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2. The Cutaway

If there are two shots taken from opposite sides of the 180-degree line, and you want to maintain believable continuity and avoid confusing the audience, you will want to avoid using these shots back to back. Sometimes, because of the demands of the story, two mismatched shots will have to be used one after the other. A simple way to avoid this dilemma is to separate the two problematic shots by putting another shot (or several shots) between them. An audience watching a film tends to remember and be most affected by the physical relationships between any given shot and the shots that immediately precede and follow it.

A **cutaway shot** is a shot of something related to but outside of the immediate action of the scene. In the scene of two people eating breakfast a cutaway shot might be a shot of another person in the room. If you cut from the medium shot of one of the diners to this sort of cutaway, then you can cut to a shot taken from the other side of the 180-degree line without creating a mismatched cut.

Most of the time cutaway shots are used to add detail and meaning to a scene. However, cutaway shots can also be very useful in masking screen direction mistakes or mistakes in continuity. Filmmakers often shoot cutaway shots (even if they are not really crucial to the scene) to use in case they are necessary to cover problems in continuity or screen direction discovered during editing.

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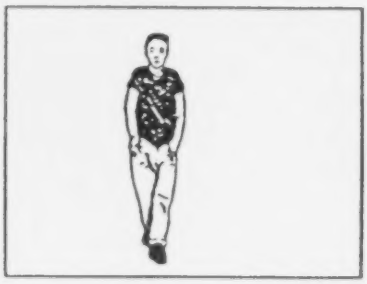
3. Neutral Angle

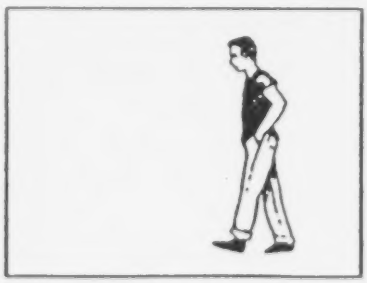
Using the same strategy of separating two problematic shots by putting something between them, a filmmaker can cut to a shot with *neutral* screen direction, favoring neither screen left nor screen right. A **neutral angle** shot is a shot taken with the camera positioned *on* the 180-degree line. In a sequence of a

man walking down the street, the first shot establishes that the man is moving from screen left to screen right:

if the second shot is a neutral angle:



then you can use a shot of the man moving from screen right to screen left as the third shot:



In such a sequence of shots t
from the first shot to the thir
angle shot between them. The
man is continuing to make p
though his *screen direction* has

4. Camera Movement

If a shot from one side of the l
with material shot from the
to avoid screen direction pr
orientation within a shot. That
transitional shot that actuall
direction relationships as th
or handheld) from a position
to a position on the other si
the change in spatial orientati
confused when the filmmak
now maintain continuity w
other side of the line.

More About Co

Apart from making sure the
the 180-degree line, it is a
position and/or the size of th
sequence of the man walk
a long shot of the person
shot is also a long shot from
the shots will not cut toge
screen will jump:

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January 13, 1997

Diane;

You have permission to reproduce pages 66 through 72 of the 2nd Edition of *Shot by Shot: A Practical Guide to Filmmaking* for use in your teaching module. We are glad that you have found the book so useful, and hope that you will continue to use it in your classes.

John Cantine, Author

Susan Howard, Author

Brady Lewis, Author

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MODULE FOR ASIAN STUDIES

FOR MCM:134 FILMMAKING & MCM:216 FILMMAKING II

by Diane Carson

1) GOALS

** To acquaint students with alternatives to the Hollywood system with its realistic use of color, its conventional mise-en-scene, and its traditional editing pattern, especially adherence to the 180 degree rule.

** To acquaint students with two great Asian directors:
Yasujiro Ozu--Japanese, 1903-1962
Zhang Yimou--Chinese, 1952-

2) STUDENT OBJECTIVES

**Students should be able to recognize the use of alternative editing rhythms and styles, ones which contrast with the Hollywood system they have learned in previous units.

**Students should recognize the differences in the more expressionistic use of color (versus Hollywood's realistic style) and the aesthetic elements of the compositions in Ozu's and Zhang's works. Students should also come to understand the thematic importance of these differences.

**Students should be able to adapt or imitate these alternatives in composition, color, and editing in their own films as they storyboard, shoot, and edit their own productions.

3) PRETEST

Students will be asked in class to describe any Chinese or Japanese films they have seen (I project few, if any, students will have seen a Chinese or Japanese film.) They will be asked to describe the aesthetics of composition, the differences in spatial composition, and any editing patterns they can remember.

Students will be asked to diagram the 180 degree rule as used in conventional American films and to describe any alternatives to this rule that they can. I suspect that few, if any students, will be able to specify alternatives, but that most students will be able to diagram the 180 degree rule as it is used in almost all American movies.

4) BACKGROUND AND LESSON

A. In class, we will review the typical Hollywood system of framing and editing (which we will have already covered, see diagrams and pages included here from the course text on the 180-degree rule), the aesthetics of the Hollywood style, and the alternatives available to filmmakers. We will do this through looking at clips from classic Hollywood films and discussion of examples we have already studied.

B. As a class, we will watch several examples of clips from films by Yasujiro Ozu and Zhang Yimou and discuss in detail the editing, compositions, and aesthetics of each. Examples will be drawn from Zhang Yimou's Ju Dou, Yellow Earth, Red Sorghum, and The Story of Qiu Ju and from Yasujiro Ozu's Floating Weeds and Early Summer, (all of which we have on video or laserdisc.) See the attached pages including the diagram of Ozu's spatial use.

C. In their own film productions, students will be encouraged to experiment with different editing styles and to increase their own aesthetic considerations as illustrated in their storyboards. (Students draw storyboards as part of the preproduction process for every film project.) I will ask them to designate specific scenes in which they apply these principles but will not insist that they include changes in all three--color, mise-en-scene, and editing. In other words, I will not insist that they make a film that deviates in its entirety from the conventional system. If they decide to do so, that will be fine.

I'll require students to storyboard a representative scene incorporating one or more of these alternative ideas even if they don't want to actually shoot and/or include it in one of their films.

Alternately, I'll require students to select representative clips that illustrate the principles we've been discussing and to present these clips to the class analyzing their aesthetics. I already have students bring clips to class (no longer than 5 minutes) that illustrate excellent examples of the production element we're studying. I've had superb and extremely varied clips shown this way and the students get very involved because they're showing their favorite, selected scenes. Their enthusiasm comes through very strongly to their fellow students and often strikes a strong chord of response.

5) EVALUATION

I'll assess students' understanding of the aesthetics of color, mise-en-scene, and editing as alternatives to the Hollywood system in two ways.

First, to the extent that students decide to incorporate these elements into their productions, I'll give them feedback in terms of the appropriateness and success of their use. I can comment on their storyboards as well as their final edited footage. In addition, students write a post-production evaluation and analysis of all their films. Through their evaluation, I'll see if they understand the choices they made and be able to assess their use of this alternative system and its effect upon their film.

For those students who choose not to incorporate this into their films, I'll evaluate their translations of these ideas into visuals through their storyboards or their understanding of the principles as demonstrated through their in-class presentation with the clips they've chosen to show the class.

Second, I'll assess students' understanding of the ideas covered here by the discussion in class and the inclusion of one question concerning this on the mid-term, short essay exam. I'll show one of the clips we discussed in class or a similar clip and ask them to analyze the aesthetics of the shots, the use of color, and the editing pattern(s).

6) DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A. Watch the clip from Floating Weeds. What do you notice that is different from the clips we've seen from North by Northwest, Adam's Rib, Citizen Kane, almost any dialogue or action scene from an American film? Consider framing, use of color, and editing patterns.

B. In the editing in Yasujiro Ozu's Floating Weeds what rule is violated, a rule that we saw illustrated in A Nickel for the Movies, illustrated in almost every scene from American films we've studied, and that is outlined in your text? What is the effect on the establishment of space and the demands made on the viewing audience by Ozu's pattern?

C. Do you find, as adherents to the Hollywood formula claim, that you are disoriented spatially in a scene cut in Ozu's style? Why or why not?

D. When would you choose to use such an editing pattern? What would you hope to accomplish with it?

E. Watch the clip from Ju Dou. What do you notice about the framing and the use of color in the compositions? How is this different from what you are accustomed to seeing in conventional American and European films?

F. What is the effect on the viewing members who are sensitive to the composition of scenes in the clip from Yellow Earth?

G. In what ways is the aesthetic sensibility Zhang Yimou demonstrates here unique? How is it different from the classic clips we've studied earlier? Use one example from an American film as a basis for comparison and contrast.

H. When and how might you use this in your own films? When would it be most appropriate?

7) ACTIVITIES/STRATEGIES FOR PRESENTING MATERIAL

A. Activities: Viewing of clips from Yasujiro Ozu's and Zhang Yimou's films including, when possible, freeze frame and slow motion to illustrate the patterns and compositions. Each clip will probably be shown several times to help students see the differences.

B. Strategies: Comparison/contrast with clips we've seen in the past and, as time allows, even juxtaposing clips from American films with those from Ozu's and Zhang's films.

8) A-V AIDS

Clips from videos and laserdiscs. From texts and resource materials, outlines and diagrams (handouts and overheads) of the American formula as contrasted with Zhang's and Ozu's aesthetics, spatial use, and editing styles.

9) CONNECTIONS, COMPARISONS/CONTRASTS

The connections with this unit are many and easy to make in beginning and advanced filmmaking courses. Students will have seen many American films, have a familiarity with the conventional style, and have a basis for analyzing the differences given students' familiarity with Hollywood approaches. In both classes we will have already spent time analyzing clips from classic films. Meramec has an extensive collection of American films on video and laserdisc and is building a strong collection of Asian films. This will give the instructor flexibility in choosing the clips for study.

I anticipate presenting this unit around mid-term or later in the semester, once students have a good basis for this next step in film analysis. The different between the MCM:134 and MCM:216 class will be the level of sophistication which I expect students

to achieve concerning this topic.

10) STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

I have had no trouble accommodating students with special needs in Filmmaking and Filmmaking II. For example, one semester I had a quadriplegic in Filmmaking. Though he could not physically manipulate the camera himself, he directed others to create the storyboards, achieve the composition, and edit the film in the way he wanted it. Similarly, a special needs student will be able to take any written tests through our Access Office facilities and to explore the application of these ideas in his or her films through their directions to others. Our Excel Program has numerous ways to assist special needs students and to help teachers such as myself find ways to accommodate special needs students.

11) ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

The best anthology on Chinese cinema is:

Berry, Chris, ed. Perspectives on Chinese Cinema. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991.

Several articles in this anthology provide insight into the contrasts between western and eastern aesthetics and cinematic mise-en-scene. I recommend, especially, Catherine Yi-Yu Cho Woo's "The Chinese Montage: From Poetry and Painting to the Silver Screen," 21-29 and Esther C.M. Yau's "Yellow Earth: Western Analysis and a Non-Western Text," 62-79.

The best book on Ozu is:

Bordwell, David. Ozu and the Poetics of Cinema. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Bordwell's book includes a chapter on the "Structures, Strictures and Stratagems" of Ozu's style, pp. 51-72. In addition, Bordwell summarizes and analyzes Ozu's compositions and editing in numerous other chapters. The book gives an exhaustive summary and survey of Ozu's career and films. Slightly difficult reading at times, but the extensive use of illustrations helps enormously in explaining the analysis. This is the best, most complete book on Ozu.

Desser, David. Eros plus Massacre: An Introduction to the Japanese New Wave Cinema. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

This book is useful in terms of understanding the aesthetics of the Japanese New Wave films (1960 to 1970) as well as the history that they responded to. It is inclusive, so Desser doesn't go into depth on any one film. This is sometimes a bit frustrating if you want more analysis of specific scenes. It does give an intelligent analysis of the milieu and, at times, the editing rhythms and compositions.

Ehrlich, Linda C. and David Desser, eds. Cinematic Landscapes: Observations on the Visual Arts and Cinema of China and Japan. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.

This anthology is extremely helpful in learning about the aesthetics of composition and farming and the use of color. Especially helpful is Jenny Kwok Wah Lau's "Judou: An Experiment in Color and Portraiture in Chinese Cinema," 127-145. The book is divided into two parts, and the introduction to each gives a concise and excellent foundation for understanding film. Part One begins with Douglas Wilkerson's "Film and the Visual Arts in China: An Introduction," 39-44.

Part Two begins with Thomas Rimer's "Film and the Visual Arts in Japan," 149-154. Other illuminating articles include Donald Richie's "The Influence of Traditional Aesthetics on the Japanese Film," 155-164; Kathe Geist's "Playing with Space: Ozu and Two-Dimensional Design in Japan," 283-298, and David Desser's "Gate of Flesh(tones): Color in the Japanese Cinema," 299-322. The introduction to the text, Sherman Lee's "Contrasts in Chinese and Japanese Arts," 15-38, also gives a wonderful overview.

Another very useful anthology for understanding and analyzing Japanese cinema is:

Nolletti, Arthur, Jr. and David Desser, eds. Reframing Japanese Cinema: Authorship, Genre, History. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

In most of the fifteen essays collected in this anthology, the authors focus on one film of one director. Some of these are very useful, for example, Donald Richie's "The Inn Sequence from Ozu's Late Autumn," 113-125 and Kathe Geist's "Narrative Strategies in Ozu's Late Films," 92-112.

Shot By Shot

A Practical Guide To Filmmaking

Second Edition

BY

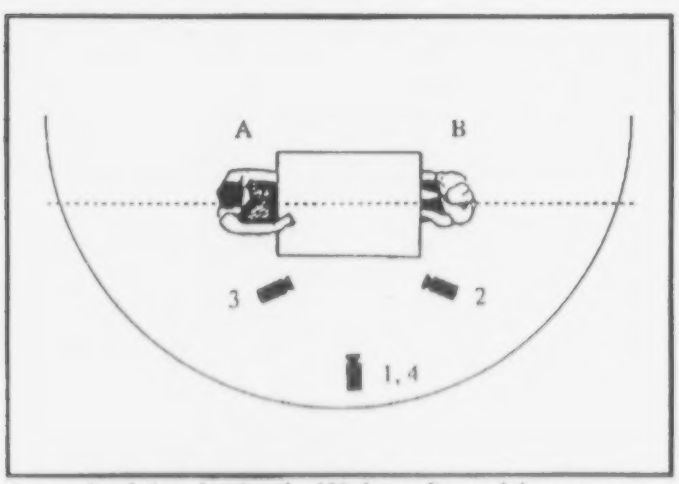
John Cantine • Susan Howard • Brady Lewis

1995 ISBN 0-9637433-1-7

The 180-degree Rule

A filmmaker must have an idea of the individual shots that will be used to create a scene when preparing to shoot. A scene depicting two people having breakfast might consist of three basic shots; a medium shot showing both people seated at a table and two close-ups, one of each person. In order to shoot and edit this scene effectively it is important to understand the **180-degree rule.**

Within any given sequence the filmmaker establishes an imaginary 180-degree line sometimes referred to as the "axis." This line is established based on the natural line or direction of action within the sequence. The camera's position must remain on one side of that line from shot to shot so that the filmmaker can edit the scene smoothly. All shots are taken from the same side of the 180-degree line. If the camera crosses the line, a mistake in screen direction will occur. In the breakfast scene the director might begin by establishing the line or axis. If two actors are seated directly across a table from one another the line of sight between the two characters would serve as a natural 180-degree line:



An overhead view showing the 180-degree line and three camera positions for a sequence of four shots. The numbers indicate the order of the shots in the edited sequence.

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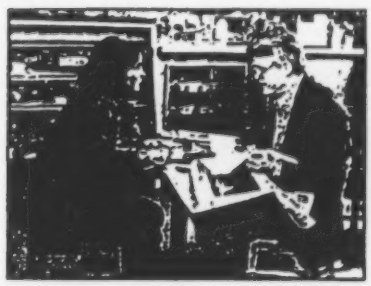
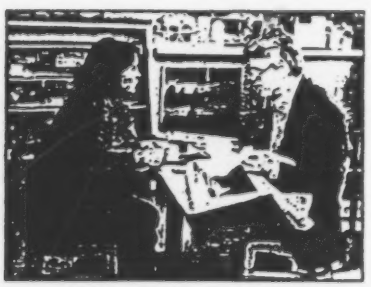
Suppose the filmmaker creates a four-shot sequence. The first shot is a medium shot of the two people at the table. This is followed by a close-up of character "A," then a close-up of character "B," and the sequence is completed with another medium shot. The series of shots would look like this:



1. MS, both characters

2. CU, character "A"

3. CU, character "B"



4. MS, both characters

The resulting sequence of shots when adhering to the 180-degree rule.

The overhead view shows that the camera positions are all on the same side of the 180-degree line. However, if a shot is taken from a position on the wrong side of the line a mismatch in continuity will result:

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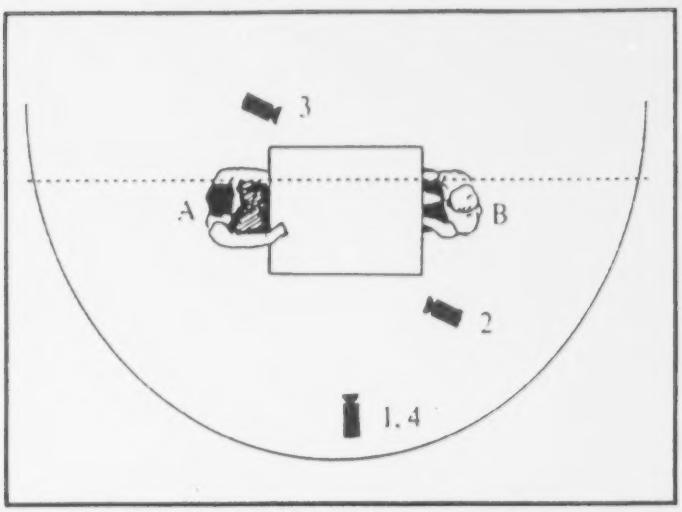
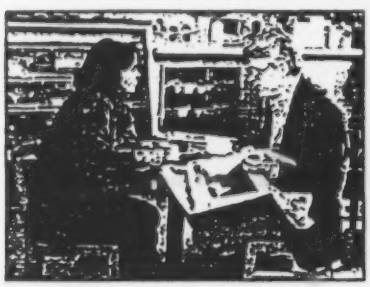


An overhead view showing the 180-degree line and three camera positions for a sequence of four shots. Camera position 3 is on the wrong side of the 180-degree line.



1. MS, both characters

2. CU, character "A"

3. CU, character "B"

4. MS, both characters

The resulting sequence of shots when breaking the 180-degree rule. In shot 3 character "B" is facing screen right, while in shots 1 and 4 he is facing screen left.

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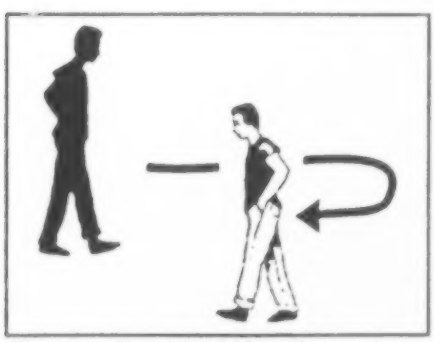
In the close-ups it appears as if the two characters are both looking in the same direction instead of looking at each other. This error in continuity is the result of positioning the camera on the wrong side of the line. To summarize the 180-degree rule, screen direction will be maintained if all shots are taken from one side or the other of the imaginary axis defined by the natural line of action within a sequence.

Changing Screen Direction

At times it is just as necessary to change screen direction as it is to maintain it. In most films the screen action does not move entirely in one direction. In general there are four ways to change screen direction within a scene or sequence.

1. Changing Direction Within the Shot

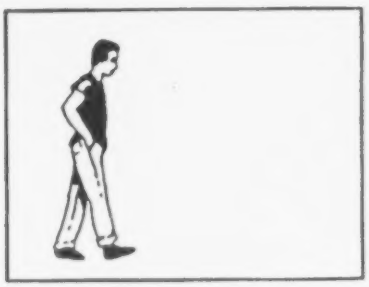
This method for altering screen direction is the most obvious. Simply show the subject changing direction within the shot. Once you have established a new screen direction, you will be concerned with preserving the continuity of the new direction.



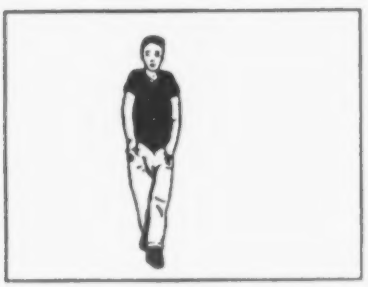
Changing direction within a shot.

Two shots separated by a cutaway shot.

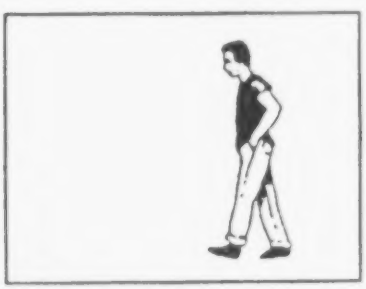
man walking down the street, the first shot establishes that the man is moving from screen left to screen right:



if the second shot is a neutral angle:



then you can use a shot of the man moving from screen right to screen left as the third shot:



presenting Zhang Yimou another week. The two directors need not be discussed at the same time since their films are used to illustrate different principles of film style and aesthetics.

An additional three (3) to four (4) hours will be required if two films (one by Yasujiro Ozu and one by Zhang Yimou) are viewed in their entirety, in or out of class, depending on the structure for viewing films in individual courses. Screening complete films is an optional part of this module, that is, the instructor can communicate the ideas illustrated by Ozu's and Zhang's films using clips. Alternately, instructors might give interested students the option of watching entire motion pictures out of class as an extra credit assignment.

Add another half hour to one hour if pre-tests and post tests are given.

FILM PRODUCTION:
MCM:134 FILMMAKING--two (2) hours each:
1. Yasujiro Ozu and the 180 degree line
2. Zhang Yimou and the aesthetics of film composition

MCM:216 ADVANCED FILMMAKING--two (2) hours to review, one hour for Ozu's violation of the 180 degree line and one hour for Zhang's expressionistic use of color. Note: MCM:134 Filmmaking is a prerequisite for MCM:216 Advanced Filmmaking. I assume any advanced filmmaking course has an introductory production course prerequisite. Therefore, classes need only review the 180 degree line and composing with sensitivity to color. However, if time permits, discussion of both these topics could be expanded with new examples from Ozu and Zhang introduced and discussed.

2. GOALS and RATIONALE

The purpose of MCM:130 Film Appreciation is to bring students to an understanding of the technical and aesthetic elements of the film medium. Students should be able to recognize, identify, and describe spatial orientation (the 180 degree rule) and the conventional use of color. In addition to that goal, in our film production courses students translate that understanding into practice in their films.

MCM:134 Filmmaking and MCM:216 Advanced Filmmaking teach students to use the super-8 (MCM:134) and 16 millimeter (MCM:216) film media effectively and creatively. Students learn about properly exposed and imaginatively composed images. In this process, the goal is for students to recognize and use the basic elements of the conventional (usually called "Hollywood") style and to use, as appropriate, other filmmaking styles.

FROM: David Bordwell

OZU and the Poetics of Cinema

2. Identification of the characters involved in the action.

3. Interaction of the characters, to some point of conclusion.

The functions of phase 1 may be fulfilled through many types of shots. Ozu may begin with 'placing' shots of signs or the exterior of a building, or he may start with a detail – a corner, a hallway, a set of objects – that indicates (more or less precisely) where we are. These are exactly the options open to a classical Hollywood director.[69] Once the locale has been even minimally identified, the sequence goes on, as in the Hollywood film, to identify what characters will participate in the scene. There may be an establishing shot of several persons, or a shot showing a character coming to interact with another. In any event, the second phase of the scene assembles the participants in a definite space. The scene proceeds to trace their interaction, usually through a series of shots isolating each individual speaking his or her lines. Typically, Ozu conveys a dialogue exchange by means of alternating shots of speakers, but in his 'longer take' films of the war period dialogue may be carried in a shot containing two or more characters. Again, these options conform wholly to mainstream principles. In the course of the action, the editing may provide a new establishing shot, or cut to another character entering the locus of action, or follow one character leaving the space, or cut away to objects adjacent to the action. The scene will characteristically conclude on a *portion* of the total space we have seen, a character or an object or a locale.[70] Here again Ozu is in conformity with classical practice.[71] Ozu's scene is comprehensible to viewers because at a basic level it is patterned to fulfill the same narrative functions as the scene of orthodox cinema. His initial revision of classical découpage now comes at the level of devices. Just as the choice of a low camera height was a simple stroke that implied very wide-ranging changes in the image, another 'unreasonable' decision governs staging and framing of the action for cutting.

The classical Hollywood cinema canonized the rule of the '180-degree line' or 'axis of action'. This assumed that characters could be arranged so as to face one another and that various shots of their interactions would be taken from camera positions on one side of that axis. A long shot might show Phil on the left and Mary Ann on the right. A closer view of Phil would show him looking right, at Mary Ann offscreen; the corresponding 'reverse shot' of her would show her looking off left. The camera's location is always determined by the 180-degree arc of possible positions it could assume on the 'correct' side of the line. The sources of the axis-of-action system run deep into Western traditions of theatre and visual art.

It is easy to see that Ozu typically does not obey these precepts. Here, from *Story of Floating Weeds*, is one example out of hundreds:

1. (*ls*) Kihachi and Otsune seated and talking (fig. 51).
2. Dialogue title.
3. (*ms*) Kihachi, looking right (fig. 52).
4. Dialogue title.
5. (*ms*) Otsune, looking right (fig. 53).
6. Dialogue title.
7. (*ms*) as 3. Kihachi, looking right (fig. 54).
8. (*ls*) The two of them. She rises to fetch more *sake* (fig. 55).

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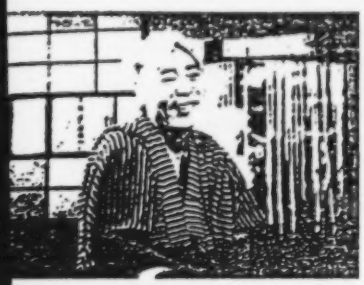
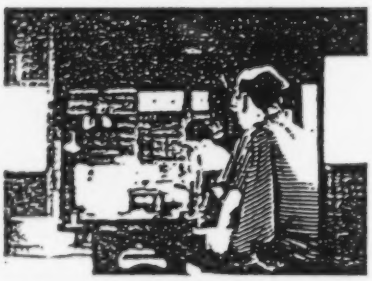
Story of Floating Weeds

52 *Story of Floating Weeds*

53 *Story of Floating Weeds*



Story of Floating Weeds



55 *Story of Floating Weeds*

ter shot 3, each cut violates the 180-degree principle, putting the camera
other side' of the axis. The cuts create 'false' eyeline matches, since the
nces do not cross one another but suggest that both persons are looking
right at a common object. The final shot reestablishes the two, but views
m from the side opposite to that from which shot 1 is taken. Japanese
tics call these cuts *donden*, or 'sudden reverse' cuts.[72]

What are we to make of them? Noël Burch treats them as powerfully
ruptive. He asserts that each 'bad' cut

> produces a 'jolt' in the editing flow, a moment of confusion in the spectator's sense of orientation to diegetic space, requiring a moment's readjustment. The resulting effect of hiatus emphasizes the disjunctive nature of the shot-change, which the developed 'editing rules' had perceptually obliterated.[73]

it is not self-evident that there is a jolt at each cut. Do empirical, 'naive'
ctators perceive one? In my experience, they do not, unless it is pointed
. Furthermore, how many jolts will it take before the spectator ignores
se violations on the assumption that this movie just does not obey the
-degree rule? Moreover, comprehension of the scene's action is not
arted: the establishing shot, the norm of alternating shots of characters,
the common-sense assumption that Kihachi and Otsune are looking at
other guide the spectator in constructing the space.

According to Burch, Ozu also challenges the notion of the viewer as

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invisible observer, a 'transparent relay in the communion of two characters.'[74] 'Once the spectator is unconsciously obliged to rectify with each new shot change his mental position with respect to the players, the trap of participation no longer functions in the same way.'[75] Here Burch takes one of Hollywood's rationales for the 180-degree system as an adequate description of how the system actually works. But the invisible observer will not do as a theory of how a film seeks to 'involve' the spectator, not even if the concept is dressed up as 'suture' theory. Our construction of a film's space involves a great many perceptual and cognitive activities that cannot be reduced to the invisible-observer account.[76]

Finally, Burch claims that the violations of the 180-degree system cooperate with a 'flattening' of the image, since in normal cinema crossing eyelines are 'necessary complements of the receding and converging parallels of deep space'.[77] Since, as we have seen, Ozu's shots in fact contain many orthogonals of this sort, this explanation topples too.

Note that Burch's account is both atomistic and negative. It concentrates only on the moment of the cut, and it sees it purely as a violation, a 'challenge' to continuity. But if we look at how the series of shots constructs the total spatial context through the patterning of shot scale, angle, and staging of movement and figure position, we find that Ozu presents a *positive* system of his own, one with many stabilizing features. Ozu does not attack or criticize the continuity rules; he transforms them into something which becomes part of his film's intrinsic norm.

Ozu conceives each scene's site of narrative action as a 360-degree space, a set of circles, as opposed to Hollywood's single half-circle. In the simplest case, a character occupies the central point and the camera films from some point on the circumference. In order to constrain his choices, Ozu puts the camera only at certain positions on the circle. Once he has defined a camera orientation, say in long shot, he will film the next shot from the same angle *or* from an angle at some multiple of 45 degrees to the prior one. The abstract geometry of the system looks like this:

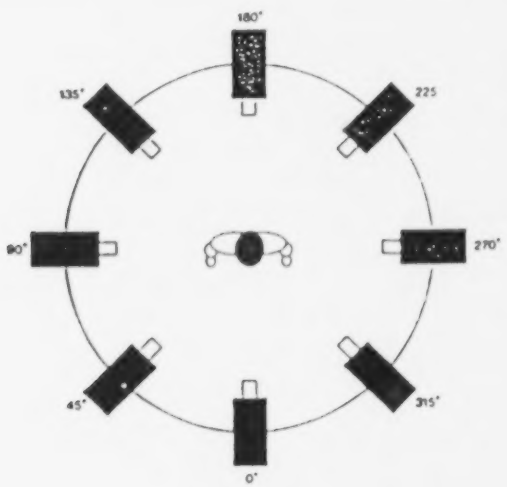

Diagram 1

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most any scene would illustrate Ozu's tactics. Our example from *Story of Floating Weeds* presents a 180-degree shift between shot 7 and shot 8, with the camera facing exactly 180 degrees opposite to its previous view of Kihachi. A 90-degree shift can be seen in *Passing Fancy*: as Harue hands Kihachi a tray (fig. 56), Ozu cuts 'counterclockwise' to the two of them (fig. 57). In *End of Summer*, a cut shifts 135 degrees rightward (figs. 58, 59). It is significant that Ozu can use the 360-degree system when cutting into or out of the space: it can link long shots and closer views. This makes Ozu's space constitute a set of concentric rings around a character. Sometimes, however, Ozu will maintain the same camera distance across the shot, creating a marked 'flipover' of the composition (figs. 60, 61). Moreover, the most common shifts are cuts of zero or 180 degrees; 90- and 135-degree cuts are less frequent, whereas Ozu almost never cuts only 45 degrees in relation to the previous shot.

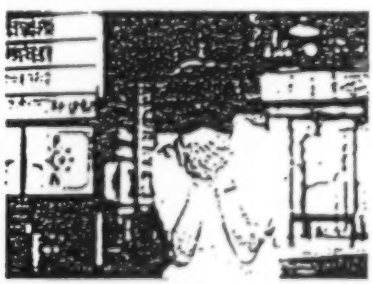
56. *Passing Fancy*

The rule of the circle gets extended when Ozu puts two or more characters together in the scene. Sometimes the characters are set side by side. Then Ozu treats them as if they constituted the center of a circle that he could flank according to his usual principles – head-on, 180-degree reverse, or multiples of 45 degrees. (See figs. 62, 63.) At other times, side-by-side figures are filmed from 'in between' them, as if each were the center of a single circle. Often this creates a flagrantly 'impossible' view, since the characters are more close to one another in the long view than the closer shots reveal them to be (figs. 64–66).

57. *Passing Fancy*

When characters are turned toward one another, Ozu creates a complex illusion. The impression is that they face one another, and that they are filmed

58. *End of Summer*



59. *End of Summer*

60. *Late Autumn*

61. *Late Autumn*

62. *The Flavor of Green Tea over Rice*

63. *The Flavor of Green Tea over Rice*

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64. *Late Spring*

65. *Late Spring*

66. *Late Spring*

from points along a perpendicular axis that connects them (diagram 2). This would be the effect of filming 'on the line' of Hollywood's 180-degree system. In fact, however, Ozu has staged the action quite differently. He places the actors in an angular relation to one another, according to two options. Sometimes the figures are placed at right angles (diagram 3). More often, they face one another but *en décalage* (diagram 4). Although I am not aware that any Japanese critic has named this latter alternative, I shall call it the 'staggered' or *sujikai* ('diagonal') option, as a parallel to Ozu's *sojikei*, or 'similar-figures' staging. In either case, Ozu then films the arrangement in his customary way. That is, each figure is treated as the heart of a complete circle, capable of being filmed from angles that change in 45-degree multiples.

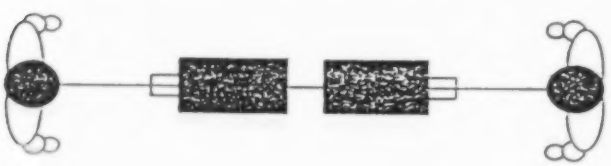

Diagram 2

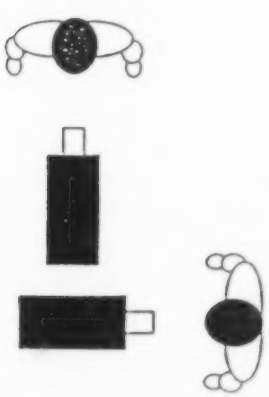

Diagram 3

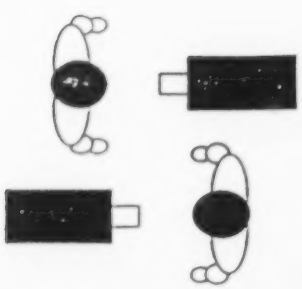

Diagram 4

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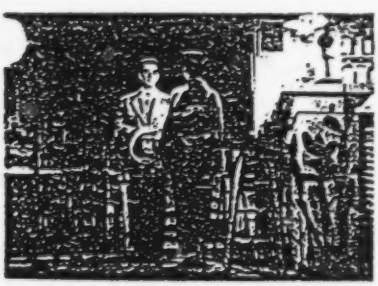
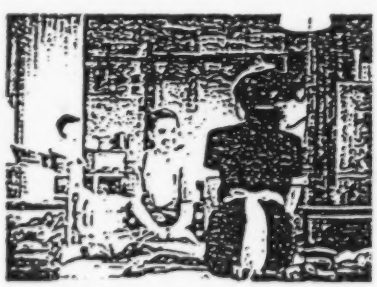
When shooting a right-angled arrangement, Ozu can create 90-degree shifts, indicated in diagram 3; when filming a *sujikai* arrangement, he can shift the camera position 180 degrees for reverse shots. In both cases, the shot-change also involves a *lateral* displacement, something that does not happen when a solitary character is the object of the découpage. In either situation, the 360-degree filming space transforms the actual arrangement of the actors: the shots on the screen usually give the impression of a direct confrontation of two characters who are not in fact *en face*. What makes the *sujikai* variant particularly cunning is that the establishing shot is often at an oblique angle and from a considerable distance, so that one cannot easily tell that the characters are not really opposite one another. A look back at the first shot from the *Story of Floating Weeds* passage will show that the staggered staging becomes apparent only if one is looking for it. Unusually clear instances are in figs. 67–68.

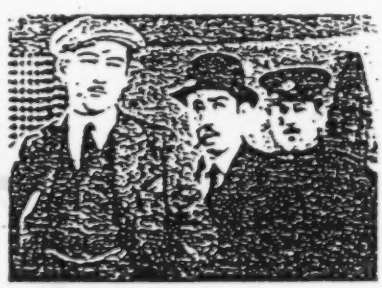
Ozu pursued these staging procedures from a very early point in his career. *Walk Cheerfully* contains several attempts at them, but they are imprecise. When Kenji is arrested, for instance, he faces the police. They look to their left in their own medium shot (fig. 69), but the next shot puts him squarely to their right (fig. 70). In addition, the exact camera positions have not been decided – probably because Ozu had not yet hit upon a fully 360-degree shooting space. In *I Flunked, But ...* and *Tokyo Chorus*, he uses the *sujikai* variant more frequently, and begins to employ true 180-degree shifts. By 1932, staggered staging is in full force (figs. 71,72) and it becomes an Ozu commonplace. In later films, Ozu will use hallways, bars, and other architectu-



67. *The Munekata Sisters*



68. *A Hen in the Wind*



69. *Walk Cheerfully*

70. *Walk Cheerfully*

71. *Where Now Are the Dreams of Youth?*

72. *Where Now Are the Dreams of Youth?*

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